(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when it would be set up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Income Tax Offices in 60 major cities are already connected to Income Tax Department network called TAXNET.

(c) The TAXNET is already functional in 60 cities. The remaining offices are proposed to be brought on the network in phase III of computerization plan during the current financial year.

Issue of PAN by UTI

2913. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have engaged Unit Trust of India for issuing Permanent Account Number Cards;

(b) if so, what is the response from the public; and

(c) whether a time-frame has been set to issue cards to all income-tax assessees?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL): (a) Yes, Sir. The Income Tax Department has outsourced a part of business process of allotment of PAN to UTI Investor Services Ltd. (UTIISL) with effect from 1st July, 2003.

(b) New procedure for PAN has been received well by the public. From 1st July, 2003 till 13th August, 2003 about three lakhs PAN applications have been received by UTIISL.

(c) Under new arrangement PAN cards are to be dispatched by UTIISL to applicants within a period of ten working days from the date of receipt of application. However the UTIISL shall be allowed five extra days during the initial period of six months from 1st July, 2003, over and above the said ten working days to allow the system to stabilize.